

What you need to know about living with Multiple Sclerosis

Roche South Africa has partnered with the Multiple Sclerosis South Africa Inland branch (MSSA) to raise awareness on the debilitating disease Multiple Sclerosis (MS) in commemoration of World Multiple Sclerosis Day on Thursday, 30 May.

World Multiple Sclerosis Day aims to bring the global plight of MS sufferers to the fore by sharing stories and raising awareness for everyone affected by the disease. In 2009, the MS International Federation (MSIF) and its members initiated the first World MS Day.

This year, the campaign will focus on 'My Invisible MS', highlighting the invisible impact MS has on the quality of life of people living with the disease. The campaign aims to give a voice to everyone affected by MS to share their invisible MS symptoms and express what they want others to know and understand about MS, in order to challenge common misconceptions and help people understand how to provide the right support.

The public can follow this conversation on social media platforms, by following the hashtags #MyInvisibleMS and #WorldMSDay.

More than 5 000 South Africans, and 2.3 million people around the world, have been diagnosed with the disease¹ which affects the central nervous system², and interrupts how the brain absorbs information and communicates with the body.²

Although there is no cure for MS, there has been significant breakthroughs in available treatments, extending the life of people living with the disease.³ Therefore, one of the goals of MS treatment is to control disease activity as early as possible.

MS affects people differently and is usually diagnosed in people between the ages of 20 and 50 years old,¹ with symptoms that are invisible ranging from abnormal fatigue to vision problems, bladders issues, depression, lack of sleep and even partial paralysis.^{4,5,6,7,8} Living with MS affects daily life, making the smallest task much more challenging.

More prevalent in women than in men³, the disease is very unpredictable, and often affects employment. The unemployment rates among people living with MS is much higher than the unemployment rates among the general population.¹

It's important for people living with the disease to have a strong support system, and a platform to learn more about MS and available treatments.

To learn more about Multiple Sclerosis visit www.rocche.co.za and <http://www.multiplesclerosis.org.za/>.

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